

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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FRANK LESLIE'S BOYS OF AMERICA

Part I

by W. M. Burns

By way of digression, I wish to start this article by saying that about the age of 14, I read a Medal Library, one of the best tales I ever read in that fine old library. It was Captain Marryatt's "The Phantom Ship."

The first "Vanderdecken" tale I ever read. And today I consider it the best of the lot of the very few tales that I have read about old Vanderdecken and his phantom ship. Early in 1929, my very good friend, the late John J. Moraney, gave me a book written by W. Clark Russell. And this was a tale of Vanderdecken and his phantom ship written along the same lines as Captain Marryatt's tale, but not nearly as good in my humble opinion. But for the life of me, I can not remember the title at this late day. Just recently a good friend of mine, a fellow collector, gave me a few scattering copies of Frank Leslie's Boys of America. That famous fine monthly paper of Leslie's published in the "70s." These old papers were brave in their very finely colored covers. An innovation in the "70s," I think.

I once had the first five volumes of this fine old paper finely bound. But like most stuff bound in that era, minus its fine colored covers. Before I even got a chance to read them, the great depression hit me hard, and I was forced to sell my five volumes of Leslie's Boys of America. I got a fine profit from them, but to this day I have always regretted that I was forced to sell them.

But to come back to what I was writing about. This lot of Boys of America contained complete the serial, "The Flying Dutchman, or, Fred of the Falcon," by an anonymous author. As we know that Leslie, in his three boys papers, largely "pirated" English tales, we can easily assume that it was written by some English author.

It was a good tale, full of "blood and thunder" and desperate adventures galore, but not nearly as well written as the Marryat and Clark tales. Historical facts all jumbled up. For instance, we have Captain Kidd and his ship "Sea Serpent," fighting Vanderdecken and his phantom ship and crew. The story tells all about the finding of Kidd's treasure but the fate of such treasure is completely ignored from the discovery on, to end of story. Kidd finally caught by a Dutch Skipper on a trail of vengeance and taken by him to England to hang for his crimes. Vanderdecken finally reaches the mouth of the Zuyder Zee, only to go down there, for good with his phantom ship.

Other fine serials in this lot of Boys of America is one titled "Ralph Rattier." First instalment gives Bracebridge Hemyng as author. All after instalments give "Jack Harkaway" as author. Of course this means Hemyng. The story apparently written by at least two authors. First few chapters about "Ralph Rattle" the boy slave, the son of a poor widow, kidnapped by a burglar that had served nearly half his life time in prison. Very interesting for about 20 chapters, then the story changed completely, a new set of characters being introduced and for many chapters it gives us the

usual "love" scenes of that period exploiting the young moneyed rake decoying the innocent young virgin into the usual fake marriage, so much written about in those far off days of our youth. The closing chapters once more come back to "Ralph Rattle" and get him out of his difficulties all right. I doubt very much if Hemming ever wrote this tale. He might have started it and left it for some "hack" author to finish up. Still I doubt if he ever even started the tale. If so, some other author surely co-operated, and with his own ideas at that.

As boy and man, I believe that I have read nearly everything published in this country that lists Hemming as author. But never before ran across this "Ralph Rattle" tale, or any other tale resembling it, under a different title. Wish some old time reader who has read this tale, would write me their reactions, as to my suspicions as to its not being a Hemming tale. (How about you doing so friend Paul?) You should be able to judge.)

A few other instalments of another fine old time serial shows up in my few scattering copies of *Leslies Boys of America*. It is titled, "Dick Lighthouse; or, The Scapegrace among the Redskins." I have never seen, or never heard of this tale, ever being published in dime novel form, in this country. Possibly in England, but never over here, to the best of my knowledge. The real old time readers will recall that Tousey in his *Wide Awake Library* published six "Dick Lighthouse" stories ending with "Dick Lighthouse in London." I have instalments of this tale also. And then suddenly appeared a sequel to these tales, with "Dick Lighthouse; or, The Scapegrace among the Redskins."

Well fellows, if any of you want to read it, I guess you will have to obtain the issue of *Leslies Boys of America* that contained it, or else try and hunt it up in some old time English publication.

Boys of America ran to 64 pages each issue, three columns to the page of very fine print. In addition to very long instalments of some 4 to 6 serial tales, profusely illustrated, it contained a lot of short stories and articles, all profusely illustrated. And fellows, you should see these fine old

wood-cut illustrations, many of them full page size. The quaint old time manner of dress of that period is a revelation to a modern reader. And the depiction of animals wholly out of proportion. You old timers will recall how out of proportion and how poorly delineated, the pictures of animals were in those days. Here we have fine examples of all out of proportion pictures of animals. For instance, dogs look like wolves and vice versa. A whale looks like almost anything you could imagine except a whale. Tigers depicted as leopards and leopards depicted as almost anything from a lion to a hyena.

This lot contains a series of historical sketches about Gen. Kit Carson, by Edward S. Ellis. (News to me that old Kit was ever a General.)

You old time readers of the early booklet novels may recall the illustration on one of them depicting Kit riding between two mounted Indians and stabbing them both to death with a huge "Bowie" in each hand. You may recall also that the novel appeared while Kit was still living. And a friend showing him the novel and its striking cover asked him if the incident really occurred in real life. And Kit's reply was, "Well, it might have happened thus, but I can't seem to remember it." Well, the illustration in question is here in this lot of *Boys of America*. Probably first appearance of it before it adorned the cover of the famous dime novel. (Remember these B. of A. was dated 1874.)

As I write this article I am negotiating for another run of *Leslies Boys of America*. If I get them, I will have further to say about *Leslies Boys of America*.

FOR THE ROUND-UP

The brother who recently wrote up *The Boys of New York* made a mistake in listing "The Headsman of Old London Bridge" and "Satans Tree" as having been printed in it. They were printed in *The Boys Leader* in 1878-9. Early in '81 Frank Tousey printed a 12 page special *Boys of New York*. I got my copy in March, and the only story I remember was "Through Snow and Ice," and I believe was about Greeley's expedition to the North Pole in the "Jeannette." I have no idea what became of my copy of this special number.

Thanks to a gentleman at Dowlors, Glam, Wales, I have a copy of the Boys of London and Boys of New York, Vol. 4 No. 208, April 30, 1881, by James Jackson, Fleet Street, London, gotten up like Boys of New York, and five of the eight continued stories were from Boys of New York, 1878-81, J. G. Bradley, Howard De Vere, Police Captain Howard, Peter Pad, Bertron Bertrew, and two by Ralph Morton and Marline Manly had been in The Young Men of America, while the story by Commodore Ah-Look had been in The Boys of New York before I began reading it. The songs, jokes, and short stories had also appeared before in The Boys of New York and Young Men of America. The price, One Penny. I have no idea how long the Boys of London was printed. Who does know?

—U. G. Figley,

R. 1, Bryan, Ohio.

NEWSY NEWS by Ralph F. Cummings

I want to apologize for the item I had in the last number of Newsy News, fellows, for I did not mean the way it was mentioned. Sneaks, skins and sharks were meant for certain fellows that buy novels with no intention of paying for them, or making trades in the same way.

I need these titles and authors names in Happy Days, Nos. 1 to 262 267 272 to 278 295 to 305 358 505 to 508 522 537 to 542 557 558 562 653 to 664 666 to 683 957 to 998 1004 to 1016 1024 to 1026 1045 to 1070 1078 to 1112 1130 to 1255 1397 to 1412 1425 to 1435 1492 to 1563.

Talbot C. Hatch has a fine article well illustrated in the Gould Battery News for Feb. 1944. "Crack! Crack! Crack! Three more Redskins Bit the Dust." Also Dime Novel Prophet appeared in The Providence Journal, Providence, R. I., March 12, 1944.

I've just heard the sad news of the loss of two of our members, Wm. M. Kreling and Irvin S. Cobb Jr. I haven't received any details as yet of Bill Kreling's death, but Irvin S. Cobb Jr. died March 10th, also Joseph C. Lincoln that wrote stories on Cape Cod, died same day. Alf. E. Rick who was one of the greatest authorities on the old bloods over in England, also died, Sept. 27th, 1943. Irvin S. Cobb Jr. has a long writeup in various papers, one

being the Worcester Telegram, Worcester, Mass., for March 11th. God bless him and all the other fellows too.

These advertisers of the Roundup have to say—

T. G. Williams says—Well, old man, the "Round-up" is getting like yourself, better and better. The set-up of our page could only be matched by the big magazine publishers. Thanks to the printer.

Chas. H. Johnston says it pays fine results.

Ray Mengar says—Have had success with most ads I've had.

Charles M. Taylor says—Round-Up gets results quicker than Sat. Eve. Post.

Ray Caldwell says he can hardly wait a whole month for the next issue.

Kenneth Daggett, a new member No. 166 says that Frank Reade was as scarce as "hen's teeth," even when they came out. All he ever saw was only a few copies. They're scarce even now.

The contents of the home of "Dexter Fellows was sold at auction, Saturday, Dec. 18th at 11 a.m. and his prints and broadsides and circus posters at 1.30 p.m. Mr. Fellows was one of the two authors that wrote "This Way to the Big Show'."

Wm. J. Benner's sold these manuscripts to The Vicery and Hill Pub. Co., Augusta, Maine, in 1899: "Rival Heiresses" for \$175.00, "Curse of the Claverings," for \$50, "Gladys Dorne," \$75, "Sundered Hearts," \$25, "The Pearl Bracelet," \$25.00, "Millicent's Sin," \$50.00, "Dora Leighs Engagement," \$50.00, "The Golden Bracelet" \$50.00, all by Charlotte M. Braeme, and "Capt. Rock's Pet," by E. D. E. N. Southworth for \$150.00.

An alarming report recently came to us that Brother Burns was so tired of War conditions, that he threatened to put an end to it all, and was seen entering his woodshed with a horse pistol. As Bill was observed pitching manure next day, it is presumed that he missed.

Ye editor must be falling back on his job as he has piles of unanswered letters on his desk all the time, and can't seem to get caught up. So if you don't hear from him right away, you will sometime thereafter. Orders sent in will be filled right away, and

sent postpaid and insured, and he will write you later if not right then and there. If ye editor hasn't got it, he'll write you right away. All letters are welcome just the same, write me your troubles, your wants and what-not.

A NOTEWORTHY TRANSFER

In one of the largest and most significant deals which it has been our privilege to announce, the fine collection of frontier and pioneer tales, numbering some 600 items of the booklet-type of novels from the publishing houses of Beadle, Munro, De-

Witt, Elliott, Thomes and Talbot, Ornum and sundry lesser firms, saved in the course of many years of search from the dustbin of oblivion by Chas. Jonas, became the property recently of Mr. J. C. Dykes, wealthy cattle rancher of Texas who is also connected with the Federal Bureau of Soil Conservation. Mr. Dykes, who is making an intensive study of the distinctive type of literature of the booklet-era, hopes to be able to enlarge this collection which even as it now stands is without a rival in the field of mixed publications of this most interesting of all hobbies. Congratulations, Brother.

PARTIAL LIST OF H. H. BRO. MEMBERS FOR 1944

23. Charles H. Austin, 153 Main St., East Rockaway, N. Y.
32. M. Bertrand Couch, 1427 Post St., San Francisco 9, Calif.
68. C. H. Blake, 400 Crutcher St., Dallas, Texas.
83. Prof. O. A. Johannsen, 203 Parkway, Ithaca, N. Y.
129. John Medcraft, 64 Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex, England.
135. J. H. Ambruster, 1458 Pensacola Ave., Chicago, Ill.
138. Walter Pannell, Box 528, Edgewood, Md.
140. James E. Casey, Hotel Howard, Fayette, Mo.

New Members

174. Alfred Horsey, 60 Salcombe Rd., Walthamston, London, E. 17, England.
175. Robert S. Conahay Jr., 345 Madison Ave., New York 17, N. Y.
176. R. G. Huenger, P. O. Box 141, Islip Terrace, L. I., N. Y.
177. Miss G. L. Elkins, Room 406, 123 Williams St., New York City 7, N. Y.
178. Clyde Wakefield, 13 Piedmont St., Worcester, Mass.

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 Young Rough Rider and Rough Riders Weekly, #1 2 3 19 36 37 38 39 43 47 48 72 81 83 84 85 90 91 112 113 114 161 162 164 169 170 — \$1.25 each, \$2.00 for No. 1.
 Beadles Half Dime Singers Library, #3 20 43 — \$3.00 each.
 Cricket Library, #6, 8, 11, 13, 14 — \$1.50 each.
 Brave and Bold, #2 7 11 14 26 29 31 32 34 35 92 96 163 189 190 200 204 252 386 387 — \$1.25 each.
 Paul Jones Weekly, #1 19 20 — \$2.50 each.

All must be in good condition, with front and back covers.
 If in poor condition, let me know.

Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

DIME NOVEL SALE "GUESS WHO, FELLOWS"

(June Provines Column, Chicago, Ill., Sun. July 23, 1942.)

A novelty in summer sales, and one that arouses nostalgia in the hearts of many men who were of reading age in the late 90's and early 1900's, is that of dime novels in the original editions being held by a New York establishment. Mimeographed sheets itemizing the dime novels have been received by Chicago collectors.

The list probably contains every boyhood favorite. Included are these issued by the Beadle Dime Library, the famous dime library of 1878 to 1890: "Frisco Frank at Glory Gulch," "Captain Cool Blade of the Mississippi," "Trapping the Grave Ghouls" and dozens of others.

We hastily ran through the list to see if ones we knew about were included. As a child we borrowed several one rainy day from a neighbor boy who had a secret cache, and as a result it was discovered and his collection taken away from him and burned. These were Young Wild West stories, in which the hero wore buckskins and had golden hair that hung to his shoulders under a Wild West hat. The Young Wild West stories, we were astonished to discover from the catalogue, were still being printed as late as 1928. Listed were "Young Wild West and the Girl Who Owned the Gulch," and, sure enough, there was one about the heroine whose name we couldn't remember: "Young Wild West and the Ton of Gold, or the Accident to Arietta." Arietta. That was she.

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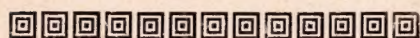
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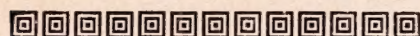


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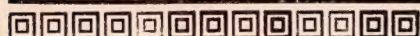
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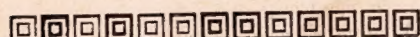
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